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ABSTRACT

A comparison of the racial composition of parent, community, and teacher representatives elected in autumn 1989 to Local School Councils (LSCs) in Chicago to the racial/ethnic mix of the populations they represent indicates significant racial disparity on a city-wide basis. Statistical data were analyzed from 503 of a total of 540 schools (about 90 percent). The following findings are reported: (1) whites won about 8 percent more of the parent seats than would have been predicted on the basis of student enrollment patterns and blacks won about 10 percent more of the community representative seats than would have been predicted on the basis of their proportion of the population of neighborhoods surrounding school areas; (2) the tendency for white overrepresentation as parent representatives was primarily a result of elections in the Northeast section of the city and in schools with comparatively high levels of voluntary transportation; (3) the tendency for black overrepresentation as community representatives was an across-the-board phenomenon; (4) Subdistrict Councils are racially representative based on racial proportions of elected LSCs; (5) based on Subdistrict Council memberships, blacks are overrepresented by about 20 percent as delegates from the subdistrict councils to the School Board Nominating Commission; and (6) whites are overrepresented among teacher, community, and principals relative to student body percentages. Statistical data are included on 10 graphs, 5 tables, and 1 map. (FMW)

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RACIAL EQUITY AND LOCAL SCHOOL COUNCIL ELECTIONS

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Executive Summary

1. On a city-wide basis, there is a significant racial disparity in the outcome of the Autumn, 1989 Local School Council (LSC) elections. Overall disparity appears lower than it actually was because half of Chicago schools, and more than half of Chicago communities are racially identifiable, making disparity there highly unlikely.

> Whites won about 8 percent more of the parent seats than would have been predicted on the basis of student enrollment proportions.
>
> Blacks won about 10 percent more of the community representative seats than would have been predicted on the basis of their proportion of the population of neighborhoods surrounding school areas.

2. The tendency for white overrepresentation as parent representatives was primarily a result of elections in the Northwest section of the city, and in schools with comparatively high levels of voluntary transportation -- i.e., Magnet, specialty, receiving (under the desegregation program), and high-achieving schools.

> In 40% of schools containing signifcant minorities, that minority won no parent seats. In most of the cases, whites dominated the elected positions.

3. The tendency for black overrepresentation as community representatives was an across-the-board phenomenon -- i.e., not significantly more (or less) in any areas of the city or types of schools we identified for detailed analysis.

4. Subdistrict councils are racially representative, based on racial proportions of elected Local School Councils.

5. Based on Subdistrict Council memberships, Blacks are over-represented by about 20 percent as delegates from the subdistrict councils to the School Board Nominating Commission.

6. Finally, this report takes principal percentages as given, with no contribution to the disparity measures. It should be noted that teacher, community, and principal percentages do not mirror student body proportions. Whites are overrepresented in each of these categories relative to student body percentages. If all disparities were measured relative to student body percentages, the teacher, principal, and parent disparities would be higher with an over-representation of whites in these categories.

Introduction

Racial equity is an ongoing concern in Chicago educational reform.

A major impetus of the reform bill was to increase racial equity in the funding, administration, and outcomes of the reform process. Since the passage of the reform bill the attention of reform groups, the media, and the community has focused on the need for equity with respect to race whether the subject has been the appointment of the superintendent, selection of principals, allocation of resources, or elections of local school councils.

This report examines the racial composition of parent, community, and teacher representatives on local school councils. We compare the race/ethnicity of elected LSC members to the racial/ethnic mix of the populations they represent in order to determine whether the goals of the reform bill in this area have been met. The 1988 act in Section 34-21a states that "The membership of each local school council shall be encouraged to be reflective of the racial and ethnic composition of the student population of the attendance center served by the local school council."

The data on racial/ethnic identification of LSC members have been recently provided to us by the Chicago Public Schools. Complete LSC election data are available for 503 schools, of a total of 540. Thus, the data here represent about 90 percent covereage of the total membership of all LSCs. A brief examination shows that schools with incomplete data tended to be ardently distributed across the system such that no significant error in analysts is introduced through exclusion of errant or missing data.

This report also examines:

the racial/ethnic composition of subdistrict councils, relative to the LSCs they represent; and,

the racial/ethnic composition of the School Board Nominating Committee relative to the subdistrict councils providing its membership.

Finally, we note the difference between the racial/ethnic composition of the Chicago Public School student body and the pool of teachers and principals from which LSC representatives are drawn. LSC members maybe representative of the pool of teachers and principals, but still different from the student body in racial/ethnic composition. We do not offer this as evidence of a disparity, but rather as a fact which must be remembered when we generalize about the issue of LSC composition and race.

Local School Councils

Election Process. Each of the 540 schools in Chicago has an elected local school council (LSC) responsible for management of educational policy at the school. The LSC consists of:

1. The school principal
2. Two teachers elected by the school's teachers
3. Six parents elected by the parents of children in the school
4. Two community representatives elected by community residents living within the school's attendance area.

The elections for members of the LSCs were conducted October 11 and 12, 1989 for elementary and high school LSCs respectively.

Election Outcomes. On a city-wide basis, there is a small, but significant, racial disparity in the outcome of the Autumn, 1989 Local School Council (LSC) elections.

Table 1 shows the outcomes of the LSC elections, by race/ethnicity. For example:

Of the 3064 elected parent representatives for whom we have data, 1696 (55 percent) are black.

Of the 3064 elected parents, 714 (23 percent) are hispanic.

Of the 3064 elected parents, 606 (20 percent) are white.

Of the 1021 elected community representatives, 513 (50 percent) are black.

TABLE 1

LOCAL SCHOOL COUNCIL RACIAL COMPOSITION

	WHITE	BLACK	HISP	OTHER	TOTAL
PARENTS	606	1,696	714	48	3,064
	20%	55%	23%	2%	
COMMUNITY	383	513	107	18	1,021
	38%	50%	10%	2%	
TEACHERS	339	596	75	12	1,022
	33%	58%	7%	1%	
PRINCIPAL	298	197	35	1	531
	56%	37%	7%	0%	

Notes:

The total numbers of parents on local school councils is 3,240. There are 1,080 each of community representatives and teachers. Totals here do not match these numbers due to errant and missing data in files obtained from the Chicago Public Schools (CPS).

Of the 1022 elected teachers, 596 (58 percent) are black.
Of the the 531 principals, 197 (37 percent) are black.

The racial mix of elected parent, teacher, and community LSC members differs in small, but significant ways from the populations these individuals are supposed to represent.

Table 2 shows the number of parent, teacher, and community representatives of each racial/ethnic group that would be on LSCs if election outcomes were perfectly representative of the racial/ethnic mix in each group's constituency.[1]

TABLE 2
CITY-WIDE RACIAL DISTRIBUTION BY PERCENT

	WHITE	BLACK	HISP	OTHER
PARENTS	12%	60%	25%	3%
COMMUNITY	43%	40%	14%	3%
TEACHERS	44%	48%	6%	2%
PRINCIPAL	56%	37%	7%	0%

Notes:
Racial distribution of parents is inferred from the racial proportions of citywide public school student enrollments. Community proportions are derived from 1980 Census data for the entire population of Chicago. Racial distribution of teachers and principals was made available by the CPS Department of Research and Evaluation.

The measure of racial disparity is the difference between the proportion from each racial/ethnic actually elected (shown in table 1) and the proportion who "should have been" elected (shown in table 2) in parent, community, and teachers contests. For instance:

Blacks constitute 55 percent of the elected parent representatives (table 1) but 60 percent of the parents of public school children (table 2) -- a disparity of -5 percent among parent LSC representatives.

Whites are 20 percent of the elected parent representatives (table 1) and only 12 percent of the parent pool (table 2) -- a disparity of + 8 percent among parent LSC representatives.

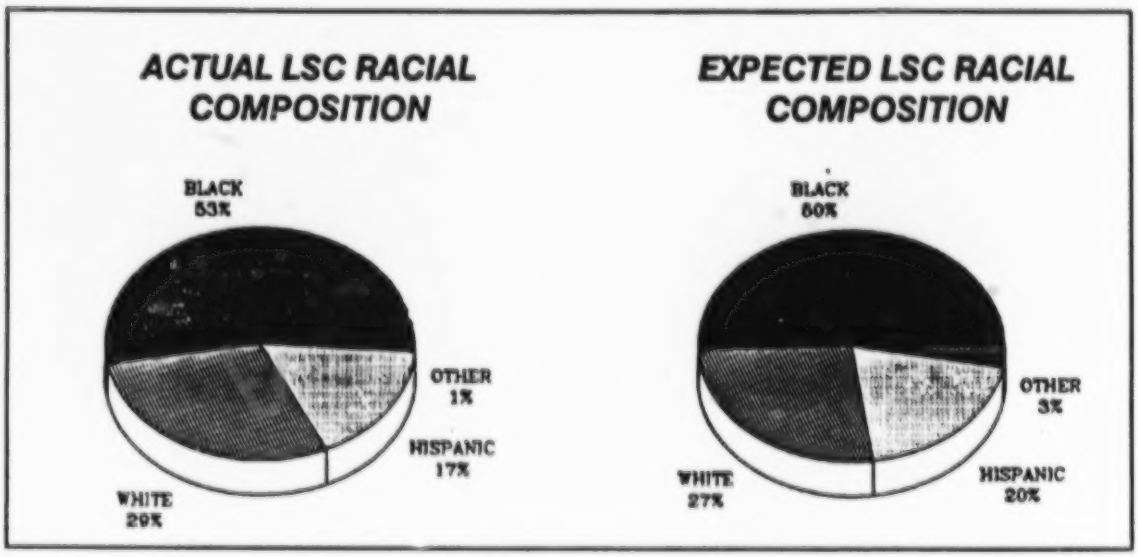
Blacks are 50 percent of the elected community representatives and only 40 percent of average community pool -- a disparity of + 10 percent among community LSC representatives.

Blacks are 58 percent of the elected teachers and only 48 percent of the teacher pool --

[1]The student population in each school is the baseline for measuring representativeness of parent elections. The baseline for community elections is the mix of total population in the "U.S. Census Community Area" surrounding the school. The baseline for teachers is the mix in the total teacher population in the school system.

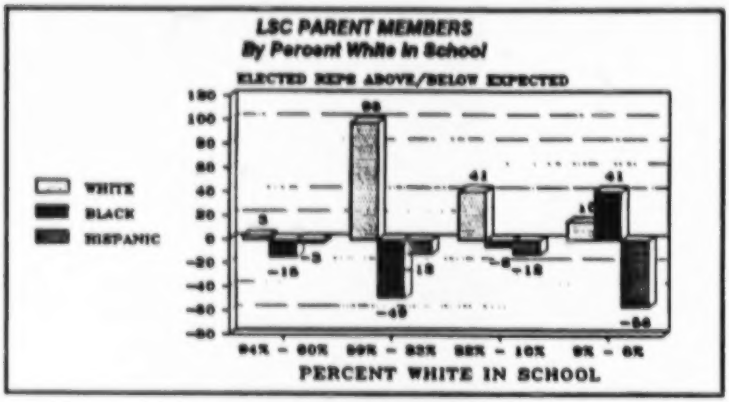
a disparity of + 10 percent among teacher LSC representatives.

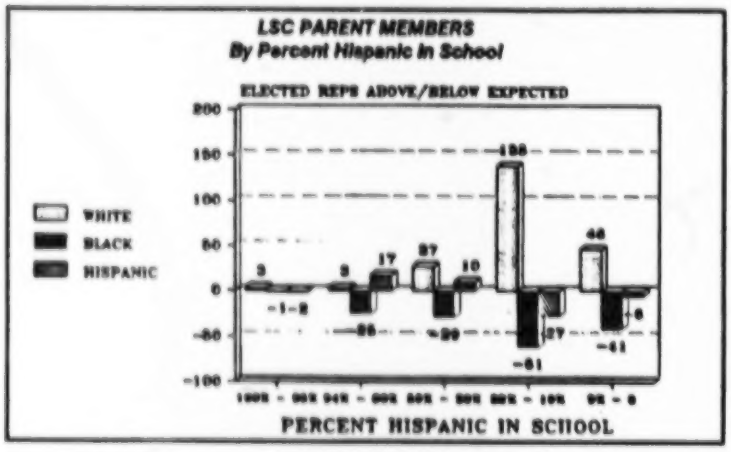
Combined Results. In terms of the total, city-wide picture, overrepresentation of whites among parents was offset by under-representation of whites among teachers and community representatives. As a result the total LSC membership, combining all categories of members, differs little from what might have been expected. As the pie charts below show, actual differed from expected by less than 5 percent.

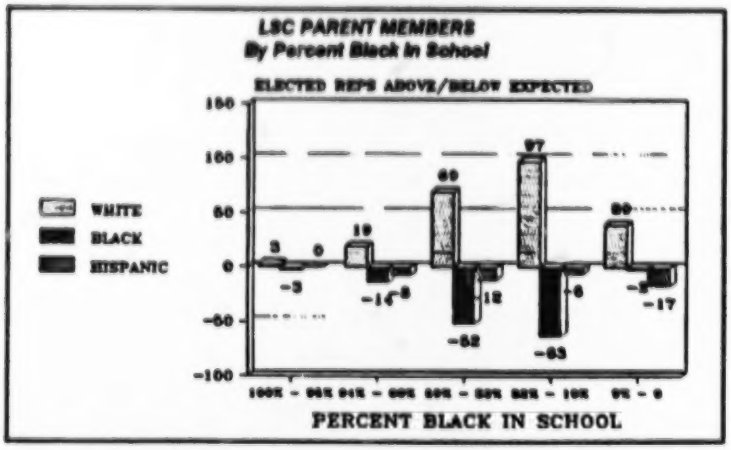


Parent Election Outcomes

On the basis of student enrollments, 389 whites are expected to be elected. In fact, 606 were. Whites are about 8 percent more of the total number of parent seats than would have been predicted on the basis of student enrollment proportions. Conversely, proportional representation of blacks would have resulted in 1,944 black representatives but only 1,696 were actually elected. Numbers of Hispanics and of other population groups elected vary insignificantly from numbers expected.





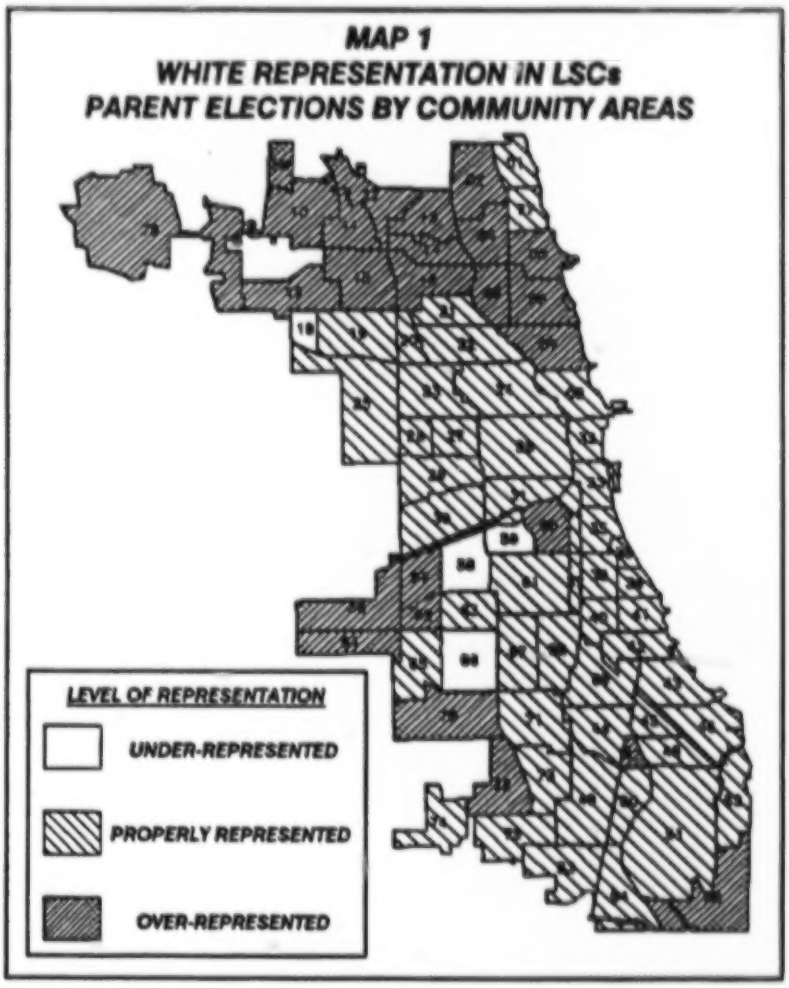


<u>Analysis by School Racial/Ethnic Composition.</u> In schools between 10% and 59% white, whites won 139 more seats than would have been expected. These gains came primarily at the expense of blacks (schools 33% to 59% white) and other minority groups.

Hispanics won parent seats disproportionately to their numbers in schools between 33% and 94% Hispanic. They did as well as expected in schools over 95% Hispanic, winning 86 of 88 expected seats. This suggests the presence of effective parental organization in some schools of mixed composition. Hispanics won significantly fewer seats than predicted only in schools 10% to 32% Hispanic. Where Hispanics won more seats than expected, they did so at black expense, picking up 27 seats in mixed schools while blacks lost 54.

Only in schools that were entirely black or had almost no blacks did black parents win seats in rough proportion to their numbers. In schools between 10% and 59% black, they lost 115 expected seats to whites.

These were significant losses totalling 25% of expected seats. Losses occured in schools located in white neighborhoods discussed above where black parents likely suffered from the inconvenience created by voluntary transfers.



Analysis by Geographic Area. Map 1 shows that white overrepresentation in the parent elections is concentrated in particular parts of the city

The northwest, southwest, and far southeast areas of the city were strongly characterized by parent election results at variance with racial proportions of the student body.

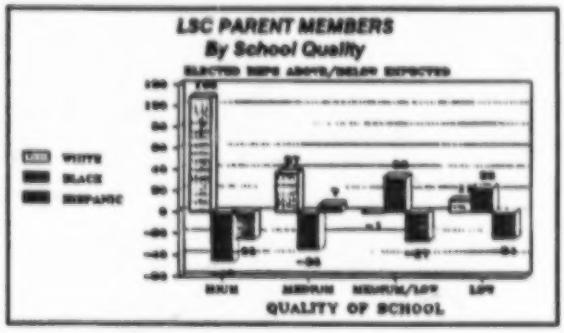
The west and south sides experienced little variance.

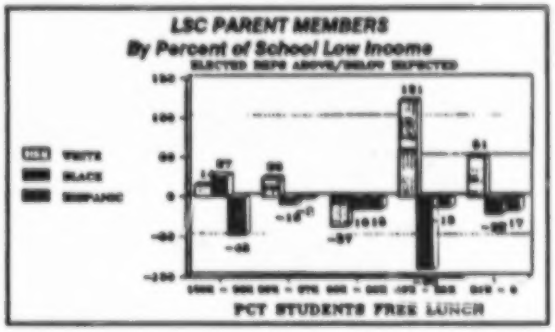
The areas of high dissimilarity have high white residential populations and comparatively high numbers of racial minorities transported in. These tend to be high achieving schools, some with magnet or specialty programs. These also tend to be schools with racially mixed populations.

Because we cannot know the racial proportions of the individuals who actually turned out to vote or who those who turned-out voted for, we cannot know precisely why whites emerged so over-represented from mixed schools. One of several scenarios might have occured. Intuitively, the least likely is that relatively mixed or even predominently minority electorates elected white candidates. This could have occurred, however, if the slates of parent candidates in white communities were predominently white. Although data is not available to formally analyze this possibility, it may have been the case as minority candidates would have lived on average much farther from the school than white candidates would have. Likewise, white voters also lived much closer to the schools in question and probably voted in higher proportions than minority parent voters who lived at considerable distance from these schools. Thus the tendency of minority students to transport into schools in white neighborhoods for desegregation as

opposed to white children desegregating schools in black neighborhoods probably militated in favor of disproportionate representation of whites on LSCs.

Analysis by Socioeconomic Characteristics. The correlation between geography, school quality, and parent LSC voting means that average student family income strongly predicts racial disparities in these elections. Schools with the fewest low income students and the highest reading scores had the most disproportionate numbers of white parents elected. Schools with at least half of students over the median on reading test scores elected 108 more white parents than would be expected and 46 fewer blacks, 25 fewer Hispanics, and 37 fewer other minorities. Schools with fewer than half of students receiving free lunches elected 172 more white parents than expected and 112 fewer blacks.





Did Bloc Voting Occur?

Analysis demonstrates that often racial majorities did vote in blocks that shut out entirely minority groups from representation in their schools. It is also clear that in some cases several minority groups coalesced to prevent a third minority group, or a racial group with a plurality, from receiving due seats. In schools of mixed racial identity, parent representation was clearly not fully racially representative. White parents were the clear beneficiaries of imbalances.

Table 3 shows the structure of white over-representation based upon the racial mixture of schools. In the city's 170 schools which had less than 67% of enrollment of any single racial group, whites were over-represented by 13% while blacks were under-represented by 10%.

TABLE 3
SCHOOLS WITH MIXED ENROLLMENTS
SCHOOLS WITH LESS THAN 2/3 OF ENROLLMENT OF ONE RACIAL GROUP

	PERCENT OF STUDENTS	TOTAL PARENT REPS	PERCENT OF PARENT REPS	PERCENT DIFFERENCE
WHITES	55%	812	68%	13%
BLACKS	39%	175	16%	-10%
HISPANICS	30%	336	32%	3%
OTHERS	6%	39	4%	-4%
TOTAL		1062		

This finding is underscored in the table below which outlines the primary reasons for dissimilarity of actual and expected outcomes for the 50 schools experiencing the highest outcome variance.

TABLE 4
50 SCHOOLS WITH GREATEST VARIANCE
ACTUAL TO EXPECTED PARENT REPRESENTATIVES

REASON FOR DISSIMILARITY	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS
OVER-REPRESENTATION OF:	
WHITE MINORITY	16
WHITE PLURALITY	11
WHITE MAJORITY	11
HISPANIC MINORITY	8
HISPANIC PLURALITY	1
HISPANIC MAJORITY	4
BLACK PLURALITY	2
AVERAGE STUDENTS FROM OUTSIDE ATTENDANCE AREA	50.3%

Seventy-six percent (76%) of the top 50 racial dissimilarity scores were attributable to whites being over-represented. This occurred in schools where whites were the minority population, where whites had more parents than any other group although less than 50%, and in schools where they had a majority. In the case of white majorities, typically all of the elected representatives were white despite the presence of non-white parents. Hispanics appeared second best at over-representing themselves, managing to do so 24 times in the 100 most dissimilar schools. Only rarely did black parents assert themselves electorally in proportions exceeding their numbers.

Absence of data showing which racial groups turned out to vote at what levels makes it impossible to say with certainty what types of voter coalitions may have formed. The failure of various groups to be elected can suggest, however, incidences where coalitions or blocks may have failed to materialize. Table 5 displays all of the times that significant racial groups failed to receive the number of seats they would have had voters elected representatives proportionally.

TABLE 5
PROPORTIONAL VERSUS BLOCK VOTING
SCHOOLS WHERE A RACIAL GROUP RECEIVED LESS THAN PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

SIZE OF RACIAL GROUP	> 17%	> 34%	> 50%	> 67%	> 83%
NUMBER OF SEATS WON	0	0 OR 1	0 TO 2	0 TO 3	0 TO 4
WHITE	11	9	4	0	0
BLACK	38	28	14	6	3
HISPANIC	25	14	4	0	0
OTHER	15	2	0	3	2
TOTAL	89	53	22	9	5
PERCENT OF MIXED SCHOOLS	33%	20%	8%	3%	1%

NOTE:
Data includes 268 schools where no racial group has more than 95% of school population.

In one third of the 268 schools that had at least minimal racial mixture, a racial group with at least 17% of school population failed to receive a seat. In 20% of such schools a group with at least 34% of the population failed to receive the expected 2 seats. Stated another way, from 20% to 33% of the time, a majority racial group managed to exert electoral hegemony over the entire slate. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the time all significant minorities were properly represented.

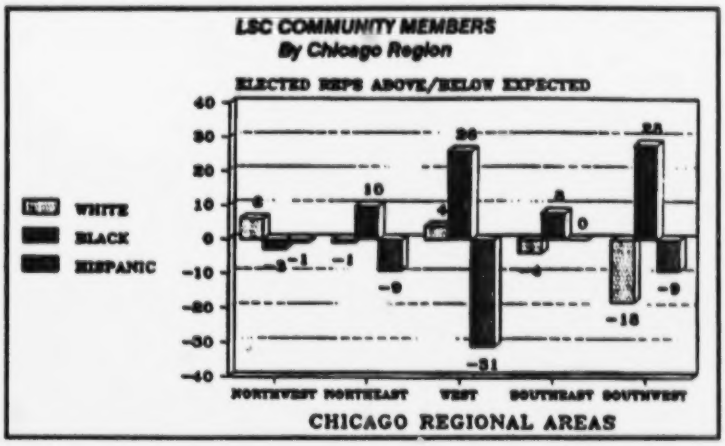
Blacks tended to be the minority group most often unrepresented or underrepresented. In 38 of 89 schools where a significant minority went unrepresented, that minority was black. In 28 of 53 schools where a minority should have received at least 2 seats, a black minority received one or none. In 6 cases blacks had 67% of the population in the school but failed to elect the 4

representatives that might have been expected. Most of these cases were due to the problem of large numbers of parents living outside of attendance areas that is discussed above.

We may conclude from this data that generally racial majorities did not vote in blocks that shut out entirely minority groups from representation in their schools. It is also clear that in few cases did several minority groups coalesce to prevent a third minority group, or a racial group with a plurality from receiving due seats.

Community Election Outcomes

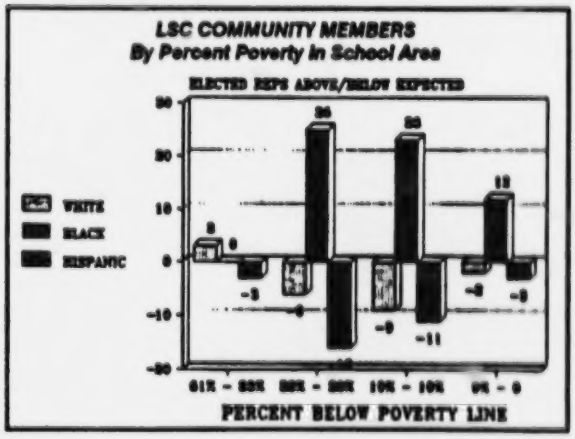
Community elections produced small, but significant differences between actual and expected election results. On the basis of population proportions, 432 blacks would be expected to have been elected. In fact, 513 were. Blacks are about 10 percent more of the total number of community representative seats than would have been predicted on the basis of their proportion of the population of neighborhoods surrounding school areas. Approximately 43% of Chicagoans are white and 14% Hispanic; however, LSC representatives are only 38% white and 10% Hispanic.



Elected community representatives were less representative of their constituences than were parents. This in part reflected a structural characteristic of the LSC elections. The 6 parent seats could be split into nine different combinations to reflect different population compositions. Only 2 different combinations of the two parent candidates are possible (20 and 1 - 1). In community elections, significant minorities were more likely to go unrepresented even with the best intentions of voters. The impossibility of representing everyone was best exemplified on the polyglot northern lakefront where those elected were 39% different from proportions of population.

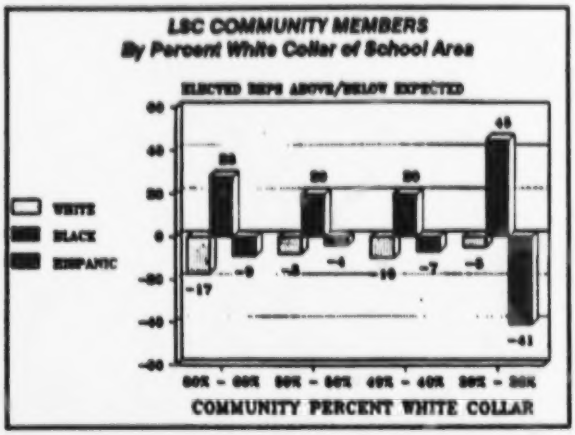
In community elections, blacks won seats disproportionately to other groups. They did so in most areas of the city and in most types of communities where they resided.

Only in the northwest part of the city where few blacks live did blacks fail to win seats disproportionately to their population. Even there, they might have expected to win only 3 seats and they won none. They did best on the west and southwest where they won 54 more community seats, more than predicted.



Blacks also did well in areas with high proportions of white collar workers, winning 9% more seats than expected in areas with 60% or more of population white collar, such as the southwest side with its middle class black neighborhoods. Blacks also won disproportionately in areas with from 10% to 32% of population below the poverty line. Their big-

gest gains, however, came in areas with the fewest white collar workers where they won 45 seat more than the predicted 78, entirely at the expense of Hispanics.



As the charts show, racial groups won seats at the expense of other groups in different patterns depending on the region of the city. In the Northwest, whites won seats at the expense of Asians and other smaller minorities. Along the lakefront and southwest, blacks won seats at the expense of Hispanics. On the west side, both blacks and whites won over Hispanics.

Hispanics fared worst among the major racial groups in community elections. In no geographical region and in no major socioeconomic category did Hispanics win more than their expected share of community seats. They did most poorly in poor communities and communities predominently blue collar. Hispanics did fared worst in their own backyard, winning only 67 of 98 expected seats on the west side.

The relative failures of whites and Hispanics in community elections were probably attributable to a number of reasons. Turnout citywide for community elections was probably around 3%, meaning that apathy was widespread. Hispanic candidates in mixed districts were probably hurt by language differences when large numbers of compatriots could not be expected to turnout. Whites may have failed to be elected because of a general pattern of low commitment to the public schools on the parts of may whites who may identify more highly with the parochial system than the CPS.

Teacher Election Outcomes

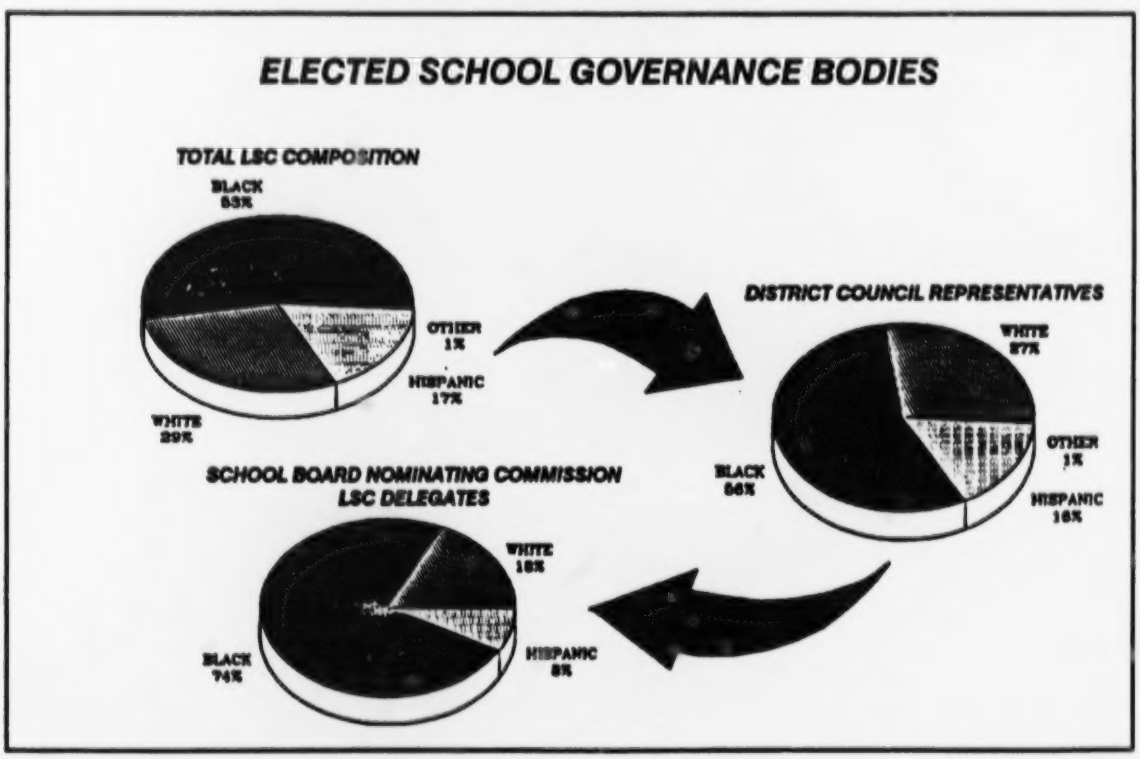
The greatest percentile difference between actual and expected results occurs in teacher elections. Whereas 44% of all CPS teachers are white, only 33% of LSC member teachers are white. Conversely, 58% of LSC member teachers are black while only 48% of all CPS teaching staff were black. This apparent overrepresentation of blacks occured primarily because of a tendency of racially mixed faculties in primarily black schools to elect disproportionate numbers of black teachers to LSCs.

District Councils and School Board Nominating Commission

District Council Election Results. Beyond the importance of LSCs representing the racial characteristics of their constituents to facilitate effective local school governance, the racial composition of councils also bears on the makeup of the district councils. Each of Chicago's ten elementary subdistricts and one high school district has a council consisting of delegates from each LSC. The subdistrict councils have powers of dispute resolution, limited policymaking, and selection of the subdistrict superintendent. They also send two delegates to the school board nominating committee.

The racial composition of the district council representatives citywide varied only 6% from the overall composition of LSCs. As table 4 shows, blacks make up 55% of district council representatives although only 51% of LSCs have black majorities. Conversely, 20% of LSCs have Hispanic majorities but only 16% of district council representatives are Hispanic. Whites and others varied less than 2% between predicted and actual. This demonstrates that in a number of instances, predominently white or Hispanic councils elected blacks as their subdistrict representatives.

School Board Nominating Commission. The subdistrict representative selection process resulted in 2 subdistricts with white majorities, 2 subdistricts with Hispanic majorities or pluralities, and 7 subsdistricts with black majorities or pluralities. These subdistricts then selected 17 blacks, 4 whites, and 2 Hispanics for the school board nominating committee. Blacks were,



therefore, significantly over-represented on the nominating commission in proportion to both citywide population and the CPS student body. Hispanics were significantly under-represented in both respects. Whites are under-represented if one compares their numbers to proportion of Chicago community population, but overrepresented if they are compared to their proportion of the CPS student body.

An Alternative Conception of Fairness

The foregoing analysis presumes that LSC membership in each of parent, community and teacher categories might be expected to reflect the racial proportions of each category. A second measure of LSC member "representativeness" might, however, be the extent to which overall LSC racial proportion corresponds to the racial proportions of the students in the public schools. This would be the literal interpretation of the language in the reform law. In this respect, councils are only marginally representative.

As the tables below demonstrate, a 17% difference exists between the overall racial composition of LSC membership and the racial composition of the student body. Blacks are underrepresented on councils by 9% and Hispanics by 5%. Whites are overrepresented by 15%. This occurs because while only 12% of CPS students are white, principals are 56% white, teachers are 44% white, and the entire Chicago community is 43% white. Thus when representatives in these categories are elected roughly proportionately to their numbers, the overall membership of LSCs moves away from minority representation and toward white.